

Minutes of the Council on Technology Services Thursday, August 27, 1998

Council Attendees:

Secretary Don Upson, Erv Blythe, Cheryl Clark, Ray Davis, Jan Fatouros, Chip German (for Polley McClure), Patti Higgins, Pete Kolakowski, Bill Landsidle, Joy Hughes, Ken Mittendorff, David Molchany, Lan Neugent, Mike O'Neil, Gerald Pacyna, Rick Parks, Jim Peters, Jerry Simonoff, Mike Thomas, and Paul Timmreck, Jamie Breeden, Andy Poarch.

Secretary Don Upson convened the meeting of the Council on Technology Services at 3:08 p.m. in the Auditorium of the Pocahontas Building.

Secretary Upson discussed the significance of the development of the Council on Technology Services ("the Council"). There are two objectives relative to technology for this administration: policy and operations. This first meeting of the Council is a critical exercise in the success of the State's ability to create, operate, and maintain a common operating environment for communications, computing, sharing information and resources, and better management of government for the citizens.

The Department of Technology's mission is to combine operational functions (IT functions) of the state and policy responsibilities that reflect a broader technology industry base. The Council will be the arm that propels the state toward developing a technology infrastructure focused on communications, computing, innovative procurement initiatives, telecommunications initiatives, and knowledge sharing.

Council members are people who can devise ways to get things done –who can work through bureaucracy and create policies, procedures, procurements and initiatives for Virginia. They are people who understand the role of technology in organizations as well as people connected to the business processes of their particular agency.

The Secretary of Technology sits at the Cabinet table and the Council will be the arm that allows the Secretary to go to the Cabinet and represent the views of all agencies, universities and local governments. This position has a unique opportunity to create a partnership that involves the executive and legislative branches of government. When a technology-based initiative is set forth, it will carry more leverage when dealing with the legislature, the executive branch, or rivalries that occur when technology butts against bureaucracy. The Council affords the opportunity to return to your agencies and propose initiatives that are endorsed by the Council – whether it is a government-wide initiative or a multi-, agency-wide initiative.

The state is at the advent of a new telecommunications procurement while another is expiring. For this new procurement, broad, requirements-based standards are being incorporated. Several members of the Council will be involved in evaluating the procurement and in helping shape and identify the telecommunications capabilities that are put into place.

Secretary Upson recognized Jamie Breeden for volunteering to be the secretary for the Council at all meetings.

Secretary Upson proposed that three of the yearly meetings be held offsite in a different location around the state. One of the first to be held in Washington, D.C. in October at the Highway One site. The Council will also consider meeting in the Shenandoah Valley and at Virginia Tech.

Mike Thomas discussed how the vision of the Council is still forming. The Council must maintain flexibility while remaining dynamic. Mike reviewed the letter each Council member received from Secretary Upson and the ten items with which the Council is charged.

1. Discuss issues that affect multiple agencies. Make recommendations to the Secretary of Technology to address issues of widespread concern. The Council will provide a forum for one-on-one conversations in order to discuss issues that affect many agencies and then make recommendations to the Secretary, Governor and the General Assembly on how to adequately address these issues. It is important for Council members to stay in contact with fellow state agencies and bring back to this table other's perspectives.
2. Assist in developing a new statewide framework for information resource planning and decision-making. The Council will establish a good statewide plan for the Commonwealth on which to move ahead and is based upon an amalgamation of each individual agency's plans. The focus will be one statewide direction.
3. Assist in the development of statewide standards, where appropriate, in all facets of IT. Standard doesn't mean something that's incredibly specific, although it can be. The Council will look toward setting standards for the telecommunications infrastructure and for data processing. It will address a variety of issues that will help agencies develop plans to make communications easier and government more accessible to citizens through a cost effective process.
4. Serve as a customer advisory/coordinating body to DIT as it seeks to address the needs of many agencies concurrently. As DIT strives for better delivery of services, it needs the Council's input. Concerns and issues must be raised earlier in the process in order for plans to proceed or to determine whether DIT is on the wrong track and need to make adjustments.
5. Participate in the development of a biennial IT Plan for state government. The Council will work together to develop a framework for how to put together a statewide plan. Then agencies will be able to adapt and shape their plans accordingly.
6. Participate in the development of pilot projects, especially in the areas of outsourcing, telecommunications and electronic commerce as well as other recommended areas. By working together when we adopt a pilot, it will be a true pilot whereby we'll decide who will conduct the

pilot. If an agency volunteers, then we offer our blessing and step back and watch the results. The Council will be in a good position to access the pilot results for statewide applicability or to determine whether to move on to something else.

7. Recommend initiatives and priorities to the VIPNet Authority - the Virginia Information Providers Network Authority. The VIPNet Board is looking to the Council to provide a state agency perspective on priority items that need assistance. As we look toward the administration's and the General Assembly's priorities, the Council will help establish priorities for VIPNet as it provides applications which interface with citizens and their state government.
8. Assist DIT and CIM in exposing state agencies to new technologies and best management practices. As the Council meets on a regular basis, portions of the meetings will be devoted to examining future issues. We can sponsor statewide forums and invite vendors to debate particular issues and provide different perspectives and exposure to new technologies.
9. Assist in the development of other statewide programs, such as training, certification, and IT workforce retention/recruitment. Workforce retention/ recruitment is a hot topic and something which needs immediate attention.
10. Any other duties assigned by the Secretary of Technology, the Governor or this Council.

Mr. Thomas introduced Andy Poarch. Andy is the Policy Director at DIT and will serve as the main staff contact for this Council. If you cannot reach one of us, you can almost always reach Andy.

Jerry Simonoff, Acting Director of the Council on Information Management discussed the extensive responsibilities with regard to information technology planning in state government handled by the CIM. The Council has adopted a new approach, which is more in tune with the way large organizations, whether governmental or private sector, look at information technology to support critical business activities. Jerry is pleased with the principles set forth by the CIM as a statewide vision. He stressed the importance of applying best management practices in terms of how the state uses information technology and that decisions concerning IT be based on mission critical activities. It is CIM's desire that you feel comfortable when submitting something for review. It will be reviewed in the context of what can best assist in carrying out the agency's mission as well as contribute to the overall mission of the Commonwealth.

Secretary Upson opened the meeting for comments, questions or initial thoughts.

Bill Landsidle expressed his pleasure with the Council's duties and believes it will be beneficial for state government. The fact that this particular body has one person at the Cabinet table who can focus that level of importance on the work this group is going to do, gives the Council an advantage over past structures that have existed.

Secretary Upson stressed the importance of the Council to make decisions, take action and cut through bureaucracy. The Council must address issues such as the Year 2000 and how to deal with the erosion of the state's IT workforce. How can the state attract and retain qualified competent workers in IT? The Department of Technology and the Council will be working closely with the Department of

Administration. There is going to be a task force under Secretary Slater's leadership to provide information technology procurement input on procurement initiatives. DGS will ask for input from the Council on how to shape an area of procurement that current law no longer fits. Another issue is the leasing of desktops, which the Department of Transportation is currently piloting. Maybe that pilot can be shared with the Council and undertaken as a potential model to consider for leasing versus buying technology. Knowledge sharing, privacy, use of the Internet, information security, future telecommunications, high bandwidths and resource sharing are areas that need addressing to ensure Virginia keeps pace with rapid development. The Council can define these issues, create subgroups, and bring others to the table to work alongside in exploring such issues.

The next Council meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, September 29. On Tuesday, October 27, plan for a full day and evening event in Washington, D.C. at Highway One. Another meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 24.

Secretary Upson asked for frustrations that agencies have with procurements or for items, which need to be addressed.

Joy Hughes of George Mason University discussed the frustration universities face when trying to partner with the private sector. The state's procurement rules are not written for partnerships. She also addressed the difficulty universities face in leasing equipment because most of their equipment funding comes through a process called the "equipment trust fund."

Secretary Upson agreed this is the kind of issue that needs to be addressed. This type of proposal is advantageous because it isn't GMU alone suggesting the issue. The Council can raise the issue, endorse it and take it forward legislatively for all universities.

Lan Neugent discussed an issue that is often dealt with in education – disparity. Seventy percent of the schools in the Commonwealth are disadvantaged and do not have access to the same services of the more affluent schools. The Department of Education has been working toward putting an infrastructure in place that would help alleviate disparity. We're hoping the results of the Council's efforts will be a statewide infrastructure to assist in such situations.

Secretary Upson met with First Lady Roxanne Gilmore concerning a similar issue. Companies have a hard time giving away their technology. The Council needs to develop ways for technology to be distributed for the benefit of all schools – not just the affluent ones. The Council can propose a policy to address this issue and lead the way for all schools.

Mike Thomas commented on the benefits of input from all Council members to develop a good mix. The Council is in the best position to thoroughly discuss hot-button items and their impacts before they get into the legislative arena. For example, the archive process and how to treat email in the context of archived records. A special Web site will be provided to point to these kinds of topics and to engender discussions between meetings. Specific workgroups will be formed to deal with a variety of topics – all

with an eye toward finding real solutions. If things are controversial or if it's about DIT and needs to be said, please say so. DIT has a number of folks here because they want input to incorporate into the day-to-day services and planning processes.

Please mark October 7th for ITEC, which is a tradeshow in Richmond at the Convention Centre. It is a Virginia technology conference and the Council will play a significant role. Members will be asked to speak. It will be an opportunity for the Council to explain Virginia state government to the private sector.

Secretary Upson introduced Governor Jim Gilmore.

Governor Gilmore thanked Council members for their involvement. Virginia recognizes the importance of the technology industry on the economy. This State is on the cutting edge and is a leading information technology state with more than 1,300 technology companies in Northern Virginia alone.

Under the leadership of Secretary Don Upson, this Council will promote new technologies in the private sector and provide a unified, interagency blueprint for state government in the areas of telecommunications, systems development and hardware and software procurements. This blueprint creates, for the first time, a unified technology policy for state government. The Council will assist in the development of a new framework for statewide information resource planning and in the development of statewide standards in all facets of information technology.

Governor Gilmore asked the Council to develop a statewide framework within the members' individual agencies. As this framework is developed, institutional plans will follow. The statewide framework must allow for innovative uses of technology to solve problems as well as beginning the move toward more common platforms and infrastructures. This interagency approach toward reform will increase opportunities for resource sharing and allow agencies and institutions to focus on mission-critical business strategies and develop compatible interagency communications.

In January, Governor Gilmore will send a legislative proposal to the General Assembly to codify the position of Secretary of Technology in the Cabinet. The Council on Technology Services will be included in the proposal. It will ensure the Council's voice is a permanent part of the information technology planning process in Virginia's government.

Meeting was adjourned at 4:30 p.m.